

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of making homopolymers and/or copolymers, in aqueous ~~solution~~, solution, comprising polymerizing one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers in the presence of phosphorous acid and/or its salts or sodium hypophosphite and wherein during said polymerizing, the one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers are neutralized by the continuous addition of, first, one or more bases selected from sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide or lithium hydroxide, and then one or more bases selected from calcium hydroxide, calcium oxide, magnesium hydroxide or magnesium oxide.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein said polymerizing is performed in the presence of phosphorous acid, and wherein the total quantity of phosphorous acid used, is introduced before the start of the polymerization as a load in a tank bottom of a polymerization reactor.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein said polymerizing is performed in the presence of sodium hypophosphite, and wherein all or some of the sodium hypophosphite is introduced before the start of the polymerization as a load in a tank bottom of a reactor.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the quantity of phosphorous acid and/or its salts, or of sodium hypophosphite is greater than or equal to 0.5% by weight with respect to the total mass of the monomer or monomers.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide or lithium hydroxide are added in the form of a solution, in the form of a powder or in the form of pellets.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the calcium hydroxide, calcium oxide, magnesium hydroxide or magnesium oxide are added in the form of a suspension, in the form of a powder or in the form of salts of anionic monomers.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers comprise at least one ethylenically unsaturated anionic monomer.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers comprise acrylic acid.

Claims 9-30 (Canceled)

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 6, wherein the salts of anionic monomers are selected from the group consisting of calcium acrylate, calcium methacrylate, magnesium acrylate, magnesium methacrylate and a mixture thereof.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the ethylenically unsaturated anionic monomer is selected from the group consisting of acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, crotonic acid, fumaric acid, maleic anhydride, isocrotonic acid, aconitic acid, mesaconic acid, sinapinic acid, undecylenic acid, angelic acid, acrylamido methyl propanesulphonic acid, sodium methallylsulphonate and a mixture thereof.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers are selected from the group consisting of acrylamide and methacrylamide.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers comprise an ethylenically unsaturated non-ionic monomer selected from the group consisting of acrylamide and methacrylamide.

Claim 35 (Canceled)